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SUBJECT: EGYPT: ARAB LEAGUE AND MFA ON KOSOVO FINAL STATUS

¶1. (SBU) Special Representative for Kosovo Final Status Talks Ambassador Frank Wisner and Ambassador Ricciardone met with Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa and Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit on April 30, soliciting support for Kosovo's independence following an anticipated May vote in the UNSC. Ambassador Wisner underscored that Kosovo will eventually become independent but that an orderly, internationally monitored turn over of power would be a far better option than potential chaos which could result if the UNSC resolution is vetoed.

¶2. (SBU) Moussa pledged to ensure the Arab League moves quickly to recognize Kosovo's independence following the passage of a UNSCR, and agreed to encourage Indonesia to vote for the resolution or abstain. Noting Russia's hesitance to approve the resolution, Moussa hinted at a US-Russian trade-off on Kosovo in exchange for a more amicable deal on the proposed missile defense shield. Wisner emphasized that there is "no deal making," stressing that all negotiations are contained "within the borders of Kosovo." He added if the Russians do veto the UNSCR, and the Kosovars declare independence, the United States will ask for Arab League support in recognizing the new nation. Moussa suggested that a vote before the UNGA might be helpful in establishing a broad mandate for independence, should the UNSCR fail. Wisner noted that, while eventually working with the General Assembly could be a useful part of the recognition process, the UNSC was the necessary forum in which to address retirement of UNSCR 1244.

¶3. (SBU) Moussa referenced an April meeting with a Serbian envoy who proposed that Kosovo, instead of an independent country, be turned into an autonomous territory of Serbia. Noting that Kosovo had "autonomous" status under the Milosevic regime (which was unilaterally revoked by Belgrade), Wisner said this proposed autonomy would not guarantee Kosovar representation in parliament, the right to independent currency, or border control. The Ahtisaari package, he countered, grants Serbs a number of rights including independent municipalities, schools, judges, and religious freedom.

¶4. (SBU) In a subsequent meeting on April 30, FM Aboul Gheit asked a variety of questions about the underlying U.S. assumptions related to Kosovo Final Status. He expressed concern about the functionality of the Ahtisaari package. Aboul Gheit also questioned the urgency of settling final status now. Defending the Ahtisaari proposal, Wisner said Kosovo's status has been unresolved for eight years, and that the UNMIK's ability to carry out its mandate is ending. Though he promised to recognize Kosovo's statehood after the passage of a UNSCR calling for independence, Aboul Gheit

declared that the GOE will not intervene on behalf of the resolution, especially with noncommittal South Africa. He promised to brief President Mubarak on the contents of this meeting.

15. (U) Ambassador Wisner's staff cleared on this cable.
RICCIARDONE